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THE

VILLAGE REFORMED

OB

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Revised by the Committee of Publication.



PHILADELPHIA

Depository, 148 Chesnut Street.



PART I.

The Village in Ignorance.

'Twas in this land we call our own A village rose to view,

Where men and women lived and work'd, And children frolick'd too.

Their fields and lanes were fresh and green, And spread with pretty flowers;

Their little gardens kept with care,
Might look as gay as our's.

But yet these folks were very poor; The men, deep under ground,

Were doom'd to dig the darksome mine,
Where coals we burn are found.

Hard was their fare, dark seem'd their lot, But darker still that mind

Which ignorance in bondage holds, And sin and folly blind.

And such were these.—That sacred day
Which God has call'd his own,

Which God has call'd his own,
Was trifled there in noise and mirth,
And worship was unknown.

They could not read that Holy Book, Which God to man has given

To teach him to obey his will, And so prepare for heaven.

The children, ill behav'd and rude, Soon learn'd to lie and swear; No friend had taught to bow the knee.

No friend had taught to bow the knee, And lisp the early prayer.

They knew no world beyond the grave, Like brutes they liv'd and died; Toiling to earn their daily bread,

Toiling to earn their daily bread,
They cared for naught beside.

'Twas thus they were, when pear their road
A lady came to live,
Who pitying these poor children's state

Who, pitying these poor children's state, Wish'd some relief to give.

She visited from door to door,
And told her kind intent,
To establish soon a Sunday School,

To instruct the ignorant.

Children of every age might then,
Each Sunday mingle there
To learn to spell, to read, and sing,
And join the solemn prayer.

Parents who lov'd their children well, Were glad to hear this news;

Were glad to near this news;
With gratitude they promis'd not
Such favours to refuse:

But said their girls and boys should all With constancy attend,

Then begg'd their little ones to try To please so kind a friend.

Others there were, I mourn to tell, So foolish, that they thought

Their children did no learning need, And would not have them taught:

But laugh'd and jeer'd the pious plan, And said, the Sabbath day

Was all the idle time they had For rioting and play.

So blind and stupid is the mind,
Where knowledge has not shed

Its quick'ning ray, which, like the sun, Beams light around our head.

This knowledge by our teachers given, And bless'd by God on high,

Can point the road that leads to heaven, And fit us for the sky.



PART II. Mary and her new Bible.

Within this vale there liv'd a man, A miner poor and rough, Industrious, and by most esteem'd

To be quite good enough. His wife and children were supplied

With food his hands had earn'd; Quiet and sober seem'd his life,

With troubles unconcern'd.

But ah! within this poor man's breas

But ah! within this poor man's breast, God's love was never found,

Not yet his ears had ever heard The Gospel's joyful sound.

And, like his neighbours, he was still Unfitted for that world. Where all who're unprepar'd to go, Must be to misery hurl'd.

To this man's cot the lady went, And begg'd the children might

On Sundays at the school attend,

To learn to do what's right,

The mother own'd they could not read, But said she was content

Their time should pass in idleness, And still refused consent.

The father storm'd, and would not have Such pious doings there :

He swore that not a child of his Should to the school repair.

Grieved at such proofs of harden'd sin, The lady went away,

Resolving to return again,

Again to urge her plea. The gospel grace inclin'd her heart To feel for other's woes:

And oh! to rescue these from death

Her christian pity rose. Once more she hasten'd to the cot,

Her suit again she made; The mother yielding, promis'd too The father to persuade.

She told him should the children be Each Sunday far away,

They could not cry, and make a noise, Or tease him with their play.

They went—and went among the rest The miner's little girl,

Mary, a child untaught and rude, That could not read or spell.

Yet she was pleased to go to school,

And every Sabbath morn Mary had risen with the lark, Glad of the day's return.

If clouds or sunshine mark'd the sky, She tripp'd the well known road:

Attentive while at church and school, Mary was styl'd the good.

Mary was styl'd the good. So anxious was she to get on,

And with her book succeed; Letters and spelling overcome, She soon had learn'd to read.

She soon had learn'd to read.

Her teachers, pleased with her success,

A fine reward had found,

A prize for having acted right,

A Bible nicely bound.

What sunday school girl but can tell, What bosom has not known,

That dear delight when we can say, "This treasure is our own,"

'Twas this delight made Mary glad; She viewed her Bible o'er,

And thought she never had beheld So fair a book before.

Besides, she felt that conscious pride, True joy alone can raise, The joy of pleasing those we love, And meriting their praise.

With sparkling eye and eager step She sought her parents' cot,

To show them, and to beg they'd hear,

The Bible she had got.

She told them, too, 'twas God's own word, Which he had sent to man,

Repeated then whate'er she'd heard

About the Gospel plan. The father cross, forbad his child,

And ordered her to cease; Nor ever dare his evening hours With such a book to tease,

Her mother heard, was pleased, and bless'd The school she once despised,

Assur'd her father, would he hear

He too would be surprised. He sullenly just gave consent,

That e'er they went to bed, Next Sunday Mary to his ear

Should prove how well she read.

The promise made, how Mary long'd The Sabbath to appear!

For then, she thought, the time to read

Will very soon be here!

That day her tasks were well perform'd, Her wish again renew'd,

Till seated by her father's side, Mary the page pursued.



PART III.

The Miner's cottage.—Mary reading to her Father.

There is an influence all divine Descends upon the heart,

When God is pleased to bless his word, And holy light impart.

The miner listen'd to his child,

The chapter soon was o'er; He listened, for he never heard

A theme like that before. His countenance, by dirt obscur'd, Pourtray'd his daily toil,

Yet seem'd, as he on Mary gazed, To soften with a smile. His dark eye, which before express'd Passion, and anxious care, Was fix'd, and, as the page went on,

Grew darker with a tear. So strange a subject as the love

Which God to sinners bore,

Deep struck his mind—he long'd to hear The chapter read once more.

"Remember, Mary," then he said,
"When Sunday next is come,

"Again while we are sitting here,
"Your reading you resume."
Of through the labours of the weel

Oft through the labours of the week He wish'd the hour return'd,

That would renew the wondrous tale

For which his spirit burn'd.

Again his daughter took her seat, And to his list'ning ear

And to his list'ning ear Unfolded, from the book of God Subjects of hope and fear.

He soon traced through the sacred page
His sin and misery great,

And felt that he could never dare
Remain in such a state.

The Bible pointed out the way, Led to a throne of grace,

And told that Jesus once was slain To save our fallen race.

Now, as a penitent he knelt, And urged the sinner's plea: "Oh thou who gav'st thy Son to die, "Be merciful to me!"

His prayer was heard, and through his life

So different he became,

So chang'd, that no one would have thought
This man had been the same.

This man had been the same. He clasp'd his Mary to his arms,

Now she was doubly dear, Since she induced his sullen mind

The page of truth to hear.
The fear of God impress'd his heart,

Was marked in all his ways; The love of God flow'd in his breast,

The love of God flow'd in his breast, And tuned his voice to praise.

Those institutions God ordain'd, The Sabbath, public prayer,

No longer pass'd unnoticed by, They own'd the miner's care.

And now his infant offspring, led Into religion's path,

He pray'd for influence that might guide To joys beyond this earth.

And oft, when pondering o'er the grace, Which him, a rebel, sought,

He loved to bless the Sunday School,
That first salvation brought.

Thus happiness shone round his cot, And peace, that's only known

By those who look to heaven, and say, "This heaven will be my own!"



PART. IV.

The Miner's master, or the happy effects of keeping the Sabbath Day.

"Miners, attend! by Monday's dawn,
"The labourers will be here.

"Some alterations to begin,

"You must the work prepare.

"And though 'tis Saturday, you still "Must work the Sabbath through,

"And I your wages will increase,
"No loss 'twill be to you!"

It was the miner's Master spoke— He trembled at the news;

The Sabbath he could not profane, Nor yet the work refuse. He thought-then to the owner spoke, "Master, long years have fled,

"Since first I serv'd, yet have I e'er

"Your orders disobey'd?"

"No, John, through all those tedious years "You've good and faithful been ;"

"Yet, master," bold the miner spoke,

"This night I must begin, "I've strictly follow'd all your will, "But, Sir, there lives on high

"A Master, whom I yet must serve

"With a more anxious eye. "To-morrow is his own bless'd day

"Whate'er you think or do,

"Those hours must be for him employ'd, "And not in work for you."

Angry at poor John's reply, His master, with disdain,

Inform'd him if he now refused, He ne'er should work again.

John felt how terrible this threat;

His children must be fed. With suppliant look he begg'd him yet To list to what he said.

"If 'tis your pleasure, I will work

"Till midnight hour is come, "The sabbath then will be begun,

" I'll hasten to my home. "I'll go to chapel morn and eve,

"I'll hear my children read,

"I'll hear them pray; I'll pray for them
"Before they go to bed.

"I'll then return, and in this mine

" Will labour hard all night,

" And thus I'm sure the place will be

" Ready by morning light."

The master, wondering, gave consent,
John well fulfill'd his word:

The job was finish'd, yet he'd not Broke the commands of God.

That night the master thinking o'er The actions of the day,

At John's behaviour much surprised, He thus was heard to say:—

"What is religion, that can teach
"Such sacrifice to make?

"This man has acted thus for fear
"The Sabbath he should break.

"That rest to every labourer sweet, "For two nights he has lost;

"Sure that religion he obeys,
"Of something good can boast."

He felt how oft his Sunday hours
Had pass'd unnoticed by;

He felt, too, these were mark'd in wrath, By God's all-searching eye.

His heart resolved that he would seek Religion's sacred power; And he who bids the sinner knock,

And he who bids the sinner knock, Had opened mercy's door. 'Twas the same mercy rich and free, Which chang'd the miner's heart, That now unto the master's mind

Did life and peace impart.

And since he knew the gospel grace, He long'd that all around,

Throughout the neighbourhood should share

The blessing he had found.

Example soon the village changed, The poor their folly saw,

And learned to fear their Maker's name, And keep his holy law.

And as when on a withering field

There falls a gentle rain,
The trees revive, and seem more green,
And flowers look bright again:
Just so his influence, bless'd by God,

Peace and contentment shed;

Order in every cottage reign'd.

Order in every cottage reign'd,
And knowledge daily spread.
The sin and ignorance which mark'd

That village once, is gone; Parents and children taste the bliss

Derived from heaven alone. Sometimes upon the village-green, Past days are chatter'd o'er;

Numbers, with gratitude impress'd, Mercy divine adore. Then oft a heartfelt prayer is raised For those who kindly came To lead to happiness like their's. And teach a Saviour's name.

So lovely is the favour'd spot, Illum'd with gospel light;

So bless'd the reading of that book, Which tells of joys more bright.

Religion can alone diffuse

True happiness while here, Alone can fit us when we die, With saints in heaven t'appear

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